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February 20 2008 Meeting Minutes

Arlington Human Rights Commission Minutes - Final February 20, 2008

In Attendance: Marlissa Briggett, Christine Carney, Vita Cohen, (Vice-Chair), Joseph Curro, Christine Deshler, Jorge Loayza, A. Nick Minton, (Chair) Marlene Schultz, William Shea, Nancy Sweeney

Absent: Sheri Baron, Mahendra Desai, Nancy Rhoads

Citizens Open Forum – Barbara Jones, Disabilities Commission, Barbara Cutler, Developmental Disabilities, and Jack Jones, Town of Arlington Disabilities Representative came before the Commission to discuss the audible traffic signal problems along Summer Street, (Rt. 2A) that have been stuffed with a foam matter that has eliminated bothersome sounds to area neighbors. There was discussion of the manufacturer, the Mass. Highway and Federal Highway involvement with the problem and the inability of all to fix it. Other area towns have the same system that is working properly and the question was, “why can’t we correct the problem?” Chair Minton requested they send us suggestions and any information that would help ful to us in understanding this whole scenario and affirmed that the voice of the AHRC in their interest would be added to the Disabilities Commission complaint by sending a letter to encourage the APD, Town Manager and the Selectmen encouraging them to stay on top of this matter and get it resolved as soon as possible

Review of January Minutes – Commissioner Carney made a motion to approve minutes; Commissioner Briggett accepted the motion as amended.

Race and Place Dialogue – Commissioners Carney and Minton attended the exploratory meeting requested by Laura Weiner. The program will be a series of one hour videos with designated groups being invited to attend various sessions on the different aspects of affordable housing regarding race and place involving banks, realtors and has been made possible by a library grant. There will be a follow up meeting on Monday, February 25th at 10 AM at the Town Hall.

Networks and Coalitions –

ACT – Commissioners Cohen and Schultz attended that recent meeting and reported that the group seems to have changed their focus and at this time they feel there is no interest in meeting with us at this time.

MAHRC – Commissioner Sweeney attended that last meeting and reported that a teacher spoke about the PBS program, “Brown Eyes and Blue Eyes,” that really made people think and also spoke of Boston Public Library Facing History guided tour that will be held in March.

Incidents and Complaints –

As a follow up to the earlier meeting with the Disabilities group, Commissioner Shea made a motion that a letter be written to the Town Manager with copies sent to the Mass. Highway Department, the Arlington Department of Public Works and Chief Ryan stating

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that workable audible signals be installed and maintained on Summer Street and that the leadership of these departments should see that it's fixed as soon as possible. Commissioner Deshler will work on the letter. Motion passed.

Subcommittee Reports

Dialogues – Attendance was disappointing at the recent Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care Access dialogue will be held at Robbins House on February 27th. The commission will rethink the process for promoting future dialogues.

Schools – Commissioners Sweeney met with Abbey Holt, the GSAC High School advisor and reported that things seem to be under control at the high school and that there is a good relationship with Principal Skidmore. Commissioner Deshler suggested a meeting sometime in the future with the interim principal of the Ottoson to discuss issues in the Middle School.

In her absence, Commissioner Rhoads sent a memo stating her disappointment in getting no response for two years in trying to set up regular meetings with the superintendent and questioned whether to make another attempt. As funds are still available for training purposes Chair Minton suggested we again attempt to meet with him and tell him of our willingness to work with the schools with seminars, etc. He will invite him to attend our next meeting.

Policies and Procedures – no report this month.

Rapid Response/Publicity – no report.

There will be a subcommittee meeting on Wednesday, March 19th at 7:30 PM, prior to our regular monthly meeting at 8PM.

Other Business -

Commissioners have been requested to update their appointment dates.

Grant – Subcommittee with Commissioners Deshler, Shea and Sweeney will work on the grant application suggested by Christine Connolly.

Motion made by Commissioner Carney to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Cohen seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 10:15 PM.

*Prepared and submitted by:
Marylynn Carnell
Staff Assistant*